Native Gardener’s Corner—Members’ Tips, Tricks, and Techniques

This column is a regular newsletter feature offering chapter members and local experts a chance to briefly share information on many things related to gardening with natives. Answers are listed in order received.

Our question for this newsletter is: “What strategies are you currently using to save water in this drought (gray water, special irrigation heads, smart controller, etc) and how are those efforts working for you?”

Nancy Harris—“We installed a hot water re-circulating pump years ago. It can be set on a timer for the hours you need hot water. We take Navy showers and not everyday. Washing clothes every two weeks with new machines. Our whole yard is planted in drought tolerant plants. Unfortunately we have a pool and vegetable garden, which negates the saving of a lot of water. If we ever get some rain we can install a rain barrel for the vegetable garden.”

Joe Gautsch—“Keep water away from drains and the street. Water collection has become 2nd nature for me now. I harvest rainwater on three corners of my house and use it to water outdoors. I keep a 5-gallon pail in the shower to catch water until it warms up and use it as toilet flush. I use the dishpan to capture reusable water in the kitchen. I also capture the water from my washing machine and use it on my natives, succulents and trees out back. I am considering a cistern outside of the back bathroom to catch wastewater from the shower and vanity but just in the dream phase now.”

Orchid Black—“I use swales and infiltration plants since most of my clients’ homes sit over an aquifer and that provides groundwater recharge (as well as healthier plants). So I concentrate on rainwater catchment and sometimes simple laundry-to-fruit tree greywater with clients. Swales, especially, allow plants to subsist longer on clean rainwater.”

Curtis Craft—“I have been using two 55 gallon barrels to capture rainwater as well as three 30 gallon trash cans that I place around various parts of the roof line. This system has worked great for me since using this captured water has allowed me to ONLY use this to water the yard since the beginning of the year. The yard has looked good with lots of flowers and shrubs blooming each month.”

Alan Lindsay—“I’m replacing my organic mulch with inorganic on the premise that water is absorbed by the organic mulch and evaporates, never reaching the soil. Also, I’m back to using Hunter’s MP Rotator sprinkler nozzles.”

Frances Collato—“The ice maker on my refrigerator makes ice cubes much faster than I use them. Instead of allowing the ice cubes to become stale sitting in the freezer, I harvest them and throw them around the plants in planters that need watering. I’ve also propagated many succulents that don’t require frequent watering.”

Thea Gavin—“To rinse the (many-and-tasty) vegetables grown in our backyard vegetable garden, we use an outdoor sink that drains into a five-gallon bucket, which we then empty back on the plants. Indoors, we capture all not-yet-warm shower water in buckets for more veggie watering. Our second-story soaking tub has a simple through-the-wall hose/siphon set-up to take that soap-less water to our citrus trees.”

Vic Leipzig—“Louann is the gardener in my family, but I’ll give you a quick answer: hand watering. That’s our water-saving strategy. We have no automated watering system. All our vegetable beds, fruit trees, and decorative landscaping are watered by hand. We have a standard single-family yard (much of it in vegetable beds) and our usage is about 70 gallons per person per day, much lower than average consumption. Also, Lou has numerous rain barrels under our eaves.

Melanie Schlotterbeck—“In showers we collect water in a bucket under the faucet until the water gets hot (water the plants with this) and then water on to get wet—off to lather up—on to wash off.

We hand wash dishes in a tub in the sink then water the plants with that water and each morning as we wait for our water to heat up we fill all Nalgene bottles and our water filter/pitcher.

Laura Camp—“I’m not changing anything. We are using about 10% of our water allocation. Our native garden uses a minimal amount of supplemental water—maybe 3 or 4 waterings per year. We had a spike in our water usage last year when we had a pipe leak in the front yard!”

Ron Vanderhoff—“Fortunately, I live within a water district that uses calculated “water budgets”, based upon property size, house size, number of occupants and real-time evapotranspiration data (water needs). Because of my mostly native garden, weather-sensitive irrigation controllers and high-efficiency sprinkler heads, we are well below our budgeted allocation. I feel sorry for the folks that have had a native, low-water garden for several years and now need to reduce their water use another 25%, while their neighbor with tropicales and a big lawn also have to reduce the same 25%. Doesn’t seem fair.”

Christiane Shannon—“In my garden, a few years ago, many of the old fashion over-head fan type sprinklers were already replaced by a more efficient type (MP ROTATOR by Hunter) and selective hand watering with the hose or water can has become the norm. The unusual
2015.06.26

that parched plant
with delicate pink petals
attracts the minute blue butterfly
a frenetic blur
briefly paused
to sip
to rest
to be captured in pixels &
neurons again & again
& savored once more

the tired feet
the sweaty brow
the hot wind
the dried landscape
fade away
as that little blue butterfly
pauses for me
(or so I would like to think)

Laguna Coast Wilderness Park
James Dilley Preserve
Road to Barbara’s Lake

California Buckwheat
Eriogonum fasciculatum

Bernardino Blue
Euphilotes bernardino

chuck wright

sandy/gravely/rocky type of substrate consumes a high amount of water and has long
ago forced me to think conservation. However, since I am still expecting to loose some
of my native plants, I focus on trying to save the larger foundation plants. I also collect
the available rain water in large barrels to be used for my indoor plants.”

Leon Baginski-“Already have natives, and have been a low water user for years. I won-der if the water company’s request for 50% reduction in home use or pay penalties will
apply to those who already are fully native and use gray water? All rinse water for my
fruits and veggies is collected in a bucket in the sink and used to water my natives that
appreciate more water such as my chain fern, black willow and seep and scarlet mon-key flowers. Otherwise, unless I stop showering altogether not sure where else to cut
water use.”

Dori Ito-“My main water saving regimen for the garden is to water the old fashioned
way, by hand. By grouping plantings by common plant groups, water needs and soil
conditions, wide swaths of the landscape can be left to the whims of nature, ie rains,
while other plants get more finely tuned manual watering. Gathering rain off the roof
into several rain barrels also helps and the collection of water in the riverbed swale,
above temporary, helps to keep the plants near the swale well watered after rains.”

Our Question for the Next Newsletter is: “What advice regarding the actual planting
(or installing—to be clear) of native plants would you give to a new native gardener?”

Email your responses to Dan Songster at songster@cox.net.

CONSERVATION

PLANNING IS UNDERWAY FOR HABITAT RESTORATION AT TWO OC REGIONAL PARKS;

USERS’ INPUT IS SOLICITED:

• AT TALBERT: See
  ocparks.com/parks/talbert/news/details?NewsID=3287&TargetID=57, con-tact
  TalbertHEP@ocparks.com.

• AT PETERS CYN: See ocparks.com/parks/peters/general_development_plan, con-tact
  peca@ocparks.com.

ACTION NOW: If you are familiar with either of these parks, please contact its link,
above, to have input into the planning for its future.

ALISO CREEK WATERSHED: GOOD NEWS!!!! The new Aliso Canyon Preserve protects
two properties, totaling 151 acres, in southerly Laguna Beach. The Preserve is the final
open space connection between the south end of the Laguna Greenbelt, Aliso and
Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, and the sea. It features generally unsullied terrain of
chaparral, grassland, and coastal sage scrub, and allows for several important wildlife movement corridors. Several special status
plant and animal species are known within a one-mile radius of the study area.

This land was acquired as part of the Orange County Transportation Authority’s Environmental Mitigation Program. The program
was negotiated by a coalition of conservation groups led by Friends of Harbors, Beaches, and Parks, to be part of the Measure M2
approved by Orange County voters in November 2006.

CHINO-PUENTE HILLS: NEW LITIGATION SET

Through OCCNPS, CNPS has once again been asked to become a co-petitioner in a lawsuit in OC. This one is against the County of
Orange for the Board of Supervisors’ recent approval of the proposed Esperanza Hills development. The site, 469 acres of steep hills
and canyons, is an unincorporated area surrounded by the City of Yorba Linda and Chino Hills State Park.

The Esperanza Hills development plan goes against good land use planning. Its EIR did not properly analyze project impacts: the
project description omitted 2,400 acres of the adjacent State Park, therefore the environmental documents did not properly study, so
did not properly propose mitigation for, impacts to the site’s several endangered plant and animal species and threatened habitats.
The mitigations that are proposed are markedly insufficient.
• The site’s populations of Braunton’s Milkvetch (Astragalus brauntonii, CRPR 1B.1) and Intermediate Mariposa Lily (Calochortus
  weedii intermedius, CRPR 1B.2) will be extirpated.

• The site’s stands of Walnut Woodland and Oak Woodland will be severely impacted.

• The development will take another bite out of the already-patchy wildlife corridor formed by natural open spaces in the Chino
  Hills.

Protect Our Homes and Hills (protectyorbalinda.com), a Yorba Linda residents organization, is the Principal Petitioner. The fiscal
sponsor is Hills for Everyone. They asked CNPS to join as a demonstration that a state organization is very concerned about the
precedent-setting nature of the project approval, in addition to the native plants and habitats at risk. Six other regional enviro
groups have also been invited to be co-petitioners.

ACTION NOW: Donations to support the litigation are welcome. Make checks to Hills For Everyone for the YL Defense, and mail to
P.O. Box 9835, Brea CA 92822.
Orange County's First Nature Writing Anthology: Your Contributions Welcome

Although more than 3 million people live in Orange County, and an astonishing 42 million tourists visit each year, to most people a significant part of this place remains invisible—the thousands of acres of wild lands that contribute to the amazing diversity of the California Floristic Province (one of the world's 34 biodiversity hotspots).

Just minutes from busy freeways, Orange County's oak and riparian woodlands, coastal sage scrub and chaparral plant communities are home to a variety of wild things that creep and flower and fly, and in former times the coastal plains, foothills and mountain ranges were home to generations of humans whose lifeways depended on the amazing variety of plants and creatures which thrive here.

To honor—and help preserve—these places and their stories, local poet-naturalist-creative writing professor Thea Gavin is putting together the first-ever anthology of poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction in which Orange County's wild places play an integral role.

Where is your favorite place? What does it smell and sound like? What is its history...its future? What plants and creatures go about their beautifully connected lives there?

Submissions* ranging from three lines of haiku to 2500-word stories/essays are welcome; further submission guidelines can be found at tinyurl.com/ke8z2uz; send submissions (or questions) to ocnaturewriting@sbcglobal.net by December 31, 2015.

* Non-English-language work is welcome; please provide a side-by-side translation.

Invasive Plant Management Program
Persistence is a key to invasive plant management! In order to stay abreast of projects and prospects in our program to assault newly arrived invasive plant populations in Orange County, stay tuned to our website for all the latest breaking news. Click on Invasive Plants in the bar at the top of the home page. And if you have spotted a possible invasion, record the exact location, take several identifying photos, and immediately report your findings to invasives@occnps.org.

A Blog for Local Native Plants and Gardening
Learn about California coastal native plants for fun and saving the planet, tips for garden design, successful care, conservation, and enjoyment, along with random factoids and reflections. Visit this witty and well-written blog by a local gardener at CANativeGarden.blogspot.com

Chapter Meetings
Chapter meetings are held on the third Thursday of the month, except in July and August. Unless otherwise stated, meetings take place at the Duck Club in Irvine. Next meeting: September 17, 2015—at the Duck Club.

Chapter Celebration June 18, 2015
With a revolving picture show to remind us of the year’s many events—field trips, plant sales, invasive plant pursuits, garden tour—we were once again reminded that it was a good year for California native plants, despite the lack of rain. The celebration of this bounty in poetry and picture was a fitting finale.

Many contributed to the success of this evening. A round of applause to Rich Schilk for the informative and pleasant nature walk. Thanks to all who provided treats for the occasion—it was a truly grand feast. Thanks to Rogers Garden, Rob Moore - landscaper, Plant Depot, Dana Point Nursery, Tree of Life Nursery, Dori Ito, Dan Songster, Sarah Jayne, and Celia Kutzer for contributions to the silent auction and the opportunity drawing. Last, but most certainly not least, thanks to all who participated in and enjoyed the evening for that is truly the celebration.

A Summer Field Trip
On Sunday, June 19, OCCNPS will host a special guided tour of the new gardens of the LA County Museum of Natural History. The trip is limited to 15 and there is a fee. For full details go to occnps.org/explore/field-trips/327-2015-field-trips.html?start=3
CNPS Membership Application
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☐ Plant Lover ..................................... $100
☐ Patron ........................................ $300
☐ Benefactor ..................................... $600
☐ Mariposa Lily .................................. $1500
☐ Student/Limited Income .................... $25
[Organizations, please go to CNPS.ORG]

☐ Affiliate with the Orange County Chapter.

The chapter newsletter, CNPS Bulletin, and Fremontia are included. Membership is tax deductible, minus $12 for Fremontia. Make check payable to CNPS and send to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816
Join or renew online: go to www.cnps.org click on Join CNPS

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Contact Information and Teams

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Membership Team:
Team Leaders: Dori Ito & Jennifer Beatty
Volunteer Coordinator: Diane Wollenberg
Outreach Coordinator: Jennifer Mabley
Hospitality: Sarah Jayne
Greeters: Dori Ito, Jennifer Beatty
Volunteer Recognition: Dan Songster
Programs: Dan Songster
Audio-Visual: Bob Allen, Dan Songster

Horticulture Team (Grow Native OC):
Team Lead: Dan Songster
Plant Sale: Dan Songster
Garden Tour: Mabel Alazard, Jennifer Beatty,
Dori Ito, Sarah Jayne, Rama Nayeri,

Plant Science Team (Research OC):
Team Lead: Bob Allen
Rare Plants: Dave Bramlet, Fred Roberts
Interest Center: Bob Allen

Conservation Team (Protect OC):
Team Lead: Celia Kucher
Invasive Plants: Henry DiRocco

Explore Team (Explore OC):
Team Lead: Ron Vanderhoff
Field Trips: Ron Vanderhoff
Field Trip Logistics: Rachel Witt

Communications Team:
Team Lead: open
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Newsletter: Sarah Jayne
eNews: Laura Camp & Rachel Whitt
Publications: Jennifer Mabley
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School Gardens: Sarah Jayne

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July/August 2015

FIRST CLASS MAIL